Abstract
Acanthopanax senticosus (Rupr. et Maxim) Harms (Araliaceae), also called Siberian Ginseng, Eleutherococcus senticosus, and Ciwujia in Chinese, is a widely used traditional Chinese herb that could invigorate qi, strengthen the spleen, and nourish kidney in the theory of Traditional Chinese Medicine. With high medicinal value, Acanthopanax senticosus (AS, thereafter) is popularly used as an “adaptogen” like Panax ginseng. In recent decades, a great number of chemical, pharmacological, and clinical studies on AS have been carried out worldwide. Several kinds of chemical compounds have been reported, including triterpenoid saponins, lignans, coumarins, and flavones, among which, phenolic compounds such as syringin and eleutheroside E, were considered to be the most active components. Considerable pharmacological experiments both in vitro and in vivo have persuasively demonstrated that AS possessed anti-stress, anti-ulcer, anti-irradiation, anticancer, anti-inflammatory and hepatoprotective activities, etc. The present review is an up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of the botany, chemistry, pharmacology, toxicity and clinical trials of AS.